

Message Text

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42

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SS-15

NSC-05 PRS-01 /043 W

----- 066271

R 301515Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8579

UNCLAS LA PAZ 7648

FOR ARA/ABC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MILI, BL

SUBJ: AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

FOLLOWING SENT FROM USDAO LA PAZ 291830Z ACTION DIA WASHDC USSOUTHCOM
USAFSO ALBROOK CSAF WASHDC REPEATED TO YOU

QUOTE 294 OCT 75

THIS IR NO: 6 808 0122 75

FROM USDAO LA PAZ BOLIVIA

1. BOLIVIA
2. BAF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT TAKES SIXTY-SEVEN LIVES
3. N/A
4. 27-29 OCT 75
5. LA PAZ, BOLIVIA 27-29 OCT 75
6. B-2
7. A. NEWS MEDIA
- B. VARIOUS BAF STAFF OFFICERS
8. 6 808 0122 75
9. 29 OCT 75
- 10.
11. DIOP PG1300
12. USDAO LA PAZ BOLIVIA
13. JACK E GATEWOOD, COL, USAF DEFENSE ATTACHE
- 14.
15. A BOLIVIAN AIR FORCE (BAF) CONVAIR 440 MEDIUM TRANSPORT AIR-
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CRAFT CRASHED AT APPROXIMATELY 1100Z, 27 OCT 75, IN THE VICINITY

OF CARANAVI (1546S-6736W. ALL SIXTY-SEVEN PERSONNEL ABOARD THE AIRCRAFT DIED IN THE CRASH.

1. THE AIRCRAFT HAD DEPARTED AN AIRSTRIP NEAR THE BOLIVIAN ARMED FORCES RECREATION CENTER AT TOMONOCO (1535S-6720W) WITH A BAF CREW OF FOUR AND SIXTY-THREE PASSENGERS ABOARD. THE PASSENGER LIST WAS COMPOSED PRIMARILY OF BOLIVIAN MILITARY PERSONNEL AND DEPENDENTS RETURNING TO LA PAZ AFTER A WEEK-END AT THE RECREATION CAMP.

2. SKETCHY INFORMATION INDICATES THAT THE PILOT MADE AN EMERGENCY CALL AT ABOUT 1050, APPROXIMATELY TEN MINUTES AFTER TAKE-OFF, INDICATING EITHER LOSS OF POWER OR INSUFFICIENT POWER ON CLIMB-OUT. THE AIRCRAFT CRASHED IN RUGGED SEMI-MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN, SHEARING THE OUTER WINGS ON INITIAL IMPACT WITH TREES, WITH THE FUSELAGE CONTINUING ON TO IMPACT ON A SLOPING HILLSIDE. INTENSE FIRE FOLLOWED THE IMPACT AND ALL PERSONNEL ABOARD PERISHED.

3. THE EXACT DEATH-TOLL WAS NOT KNOWN UNTIL LATE 28 OCT, SINCE THE ONLY AVAILABLE PASSENGER MANIFEST WAS FOR THE FLIGHT FROM LA PAZ TO TOMONOCO ON 24 OCT. THIS MANIFEST SHOWED FIFTY-FIVE PASSENGERS ABOARD. RECOVERY AND IDENTIFICATION OF REMAINS ON 27 AND 28 OCT REVEALED HOWEVER, THAT THERE WERE ACTUALLY SIXTY-THREE PASSENGERS ABOARD ON THE FATAL FLIGHT. THE SENIOR MILITARY PASSENGERS ABOARD WERE TWO LT COLS OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. MOST OF THE OTHER MILITARY PERSONNEL ABOARD WERE JUNIOR OFFICERS OF THE BOLIVIAN ARMY LANZA REGIMENT.

4. COMPLETE PASSENGER LIST AND FURTHER DETAILS OF THE ACCIDENT WILL BE PROVIDED IN SUBSEQUENT NON-MESSAGE IR. THE TOTAL TOLL INCLUDES TWENTY MILITARY OFFICERS, SIX MALE CIVILIANS, AND THE REMAINDER WERE WIVES AND CHILDREN OF THE ABOVE.

COMMENT: THE BAF IS INVESTIGATING THE CAUSE OF THIS TRAGIC ACCIDENT WHICH IS THE WORST IN BAF HISTORY. THERE IS MUCH LOCAL SPECULATION OVER THE PROBABILITY THAT THE AIRCRAFT MAY HAVE BEEN GROSSLY OVERLOADED AND, CONSIDERING THE FACT THAT THE BAF CV-440 CONFIGURATION PROVIDES ONLY FORTY-EIGHT SEATS, THIS WOULD APPEAR TO BE A POSSIBLE FACTOR. RO ATTENDED MILITARY SERVICES CONDUCTED ON 28 OCT AND EXTENDED OFFICIAL CONDOLENCES ON BEHALF OF AMBASSADOR AND US ARMED FORCES TO APPROPRIATE GOB OFFICIALS. UNQUOTE STEDMAN

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Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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